

## Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program FAQ (2024)

Division of Administrative Services



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### Can projects take place before RFSI funding is awarded?

RFSI projects can begin no earlier than funding distribution estimated to be July 1, 2024, and must end by May 24, 2027. All costs outside of these dates would be considered unallowable.

### Can an organization with multiple facilities submit multiple applications to RFSI?

No. Each organization may only submit one application for RFSI funds.

### Are there any restrictions regarding common ownership of multiple businesses, entities, or organizations being limited to a single application?

Given that each applicant organization has its own Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), each organization is eligible to apply for RFSI funding (one application per organization). However, each applicant organization must meet the entity eligibility requirements detailed in Section 1.5.2 of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s RFSI [Program Scope and Requirements](#).

### Can projects have multiple parts or facets, such as both increasing storage and seeking energy savings?

Yes, RFSI Infrastructure Grant projects may combine multiple elements that support the middle of the supply chain.

### How does RFSI define "small business"?

RFSI uses the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)'s guidelines to determine whether an organization qualifies as a small business. NDA recommends visiting the SBA [website](#) for more detail.

### How does RFSI define a "beginning farmer"?

RFSI defines beginning farmers as an individual or entity that has not operated a farm before or one that has not operated for more than 10 years and who substantially participates in the operation.

### Will the RFSI Office Hours be recorded?

Office Hours will not be recorded. Office Hours are intended to be more conversational, as a resource for individuals to submit questions or discuss their application. FAQ documents will be updated after each Office Hour to ensure common questions are answered, and they will be made available on the NDA website at [agri.nv.gov/Administration/Grant\\_Opportunities](http://agri.nv.gov/Administration/Grant_Opportunities).

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**Is aquaculture (farm-raised fish, shellfish, seaweed, etc.) an eligible commodity for RFSI funding?**

Yes, farm-raised aquaculture projects may be funded by RFSI, including equipment to process these commodities. Note that wild-caught fish or seafood are not eligible for RFSI funding. USDA defines aquaculture as the production of aquatic organisms under controlled conditions throughout all or part of their lifecycle.

**Are distribution companies eligible for RFSI funding?**

Yes, organizations that aggregate and/or distribute eligible commodities are eligible for RFSI funding.

**Are bakeries eligible for RFSI funding?**

Baking activities may be eligible as creating value-added products. Processing activities (such as baking) and aggregation/distribution activities are eligible for RFSI funding. Activities related to markets or consumers, such as marketing and promotion, renovation of retail space, or other activities related to selling baked goods would not be eligible.

**Does an organization's income affect RFSI eligibility?**

An organization's income does not affect RFSI eligibility in the application process; any eligible entity is welcome to apply.

**Can RFSI funding be used to support growing or harvesting activities? What about retail activities?**

A. No, RFSI funding cannot be used in support of growing, harvesting, or retail activities. RFSI funding is designed to support the middle of the supply chain; that is, processing, aggregation, and/or distribution activities.

**Can RFSI funding be used to fund a project that transports donated food to recipients in other locations?**

RFSI funds cannot be used to deliver directly to consumers, as this is not considered to be the middle of the supply chain. Transportation between aggregation centers or from a distribution center to a market would be allowable. RFSI funds cannot be used to deliver directly to consumers, as this is not considered to be the middle of the supply chain.

**Is the construction of wastewater management structures an allowable RFSI project?**

Yes, wastewater management structures may be constructed using RFSI funds.

**Can RFSI funding be used to support educational programs designed to help create businesses?**

RFSI funding is not designed to support the creation of new businesses or the development of business plans.

### **Can RFSI funds be used to purchase in-field equipment?**

Yes, equipment designed for in-field use is allowable, provided it is used for processing, rather than harvesting, activities.

### **Can non-profit organizations use RFSI funds to support the activities of the organizations with which they work?**

Non-profit organizations may use RFSI funds in support of middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, and distribution. Note that all commodities must be eligible for RFSI funding. It is the responsibility of the organization awarded funding to ensure that RFSI funds are not used in support of unallowable or ineligible costs, activities, or commodities. If funds are found to be used for ineligible costs, they must be reimbursed to the NDA and the organization may become ineligible to apply for future funding.

### **Can Infrastructure Grant recipient funds be used to make subawards below the \$100,000 award amount?**

It is unallowable for Infrastructure Grant recipients to issue subawards. USDA's Regional Food Business Centers offer Business Builder Grants in amounts up to \$100,000.

### **Is a state allowed to deny RFSI applicants from requesting indirect costs in their project budgets?**

No, States must negotiate the indirect cost rate with all subrecipients in accordance with [2 CFR 200.332\(a\)\(4\)](#).

### **Can a producer buy processing equipment that will only benefit their own business, or does it need to benefit more than one entity?**

Yes, a producer can buy equipment that benefits their own business. Projects that benefit an individual producer may be less competitive than a similar project that benefits multiple producers.

### **Are projects focused on cannabis products made for human consumption eligible for RFSI funding?**

No, plants federally controlled as illegal drug plants (e.g. cannabis) are ineligible. This is in addition to the eligibility requirements outlined in RFSI [Scope and Requirements](#).

### **Can funds be used for farm production related activities?**

No, funds cannot be used for agricultural production activities/costs including farm equipment, tools, supplies, gardening, or production related labor/training. Please note that in accordance with the RFSI [Scope and Requirements](#), on farm post-harvest processing, preservation, and storage/cold storage are allowable activities.

### **Can funds be used for construction?**

RFSI funds may be used for improvements, rearrangements, or alterations of an existing building or facility to use the space more effectively and to accommodate new or upgraded equipment and processes. Funds may also be used for new construction of buildings or structural changes to an existing building/facility resulting in a square foot expansion or requiring changes to the buildings' floor, foundation, and exterior or load bearing walls.

### **Can I use funds to purchase land or buildings?**

No. It is unallowable to use grant funds for the acquisition of buildings, facilities, or land.

### **Can funds be used to repair and/or upgrade existing equipment?**

Yes, funds may be used to repair or update existing equipment.

### **Can funds be used to purchase vehicles?**

Special purpose vehicles relevant to the scope of work on an Infrastructure Grant project, such as delivery vehicles or refrigerated trucks, are allowable. However, the purchase of general use vehicles is not allowable. Please see the RFSI Program Specific Terms and Conditions for more information on general use and special purpose equipment.

### **Are food banks eligible to apply for RFSI funding?**

Food banks are included in the definition of 'Institution' in the RFSI [Scope and Requirements](#), and are thus eligible to apply for RFSI funding, contingent on the types of activities they are doing. The definition of 'institution' includes that they must be "bringing producers together to establish cooperative or shared infrastructure or invest in equipment that will benefit multiple producers middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, distribution of targeted agricultural product." Food banks may also qualify as a 'nonprofit organization' or another entity type, again with the requirement that they meet the middle of the supply chain eligibility description. For instance, a 'nonprofit organization' includes only those that are "operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, distribution of targeted agricultural products."

### **Are there any resources for projects working with meat and poultry?**

The NDA does not currently have grant funding for meat and poultry. However, we do have a Meat and Poultry Inspection Program that meat and poultry producers and processors can explore later this year. For further information, please contact Shayda Sanjideh at [ssanjideh@agri.nv.gov](mailto:ssanjideh@agri.nv.gov).